

Deaf Culture Question of the Week – Mar. 18-22, 2013  
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We know that ASL uses the head, face, shoulders, arms and body to articulate complex meaning units simultaneously. This is one of the fundamental differences between ASL and spoken languages like English. Using all of these aspects of articulation at a single moment in time a very complex meaning unit can be expressed. Spoken languages by necessity are linear in their articulation. Only one word or sound at a time can be spoken and words flow one after the other from the speaker's mouth. [Note: There is some modest degree of simultaneity in spoken languages when considering voice pitch and inflection. These aspects do add to the meaning of a word or string of words being spoken and they do occur simultaneous with the articulation of the words. But, ASL is "*champ*," as we say in ASL, when it comes to being able to pack a whole bunch of meaning into a single sign.] This aspect of ASL is the bane of interpreters who are in a losing game from the start as they try to translate all the meaning they are seeing in the signing to spoken English.

Now to the DCQW.... In ASL which body part listed below by itself can be used to express "Yeah, I know what you mean" or "I agree" or simply "Yes."

- a) The pinky finger
- b) The eyebrows
- c) The shoulders
- d) The nose

Go to the bottom of this message for the answer.

Answer: “d” – The nose. This sign is called "*nose twitch*." No manual sign is used. Signers simply twitch their nose to respond, "Yes" or "Yeah, I know what you mean," "I agree" and so forth. The nose twitch signals "agreement" or "affirmation" and can be used as a response in conversation with another signer.

Check out this video to see Ella Mae Lentz tell a funny story involving "nose twitching."

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q5H3pMjlnY8>